

Approved 11/9/10

**Rockville Environment Commission
Minutes of the Maryland Multi-City Environmental Boards
and Commissions Meeting of Thursday, October 14, 2010
At the Croydon Creek Nature Center 852 Avery Road**

Attendance

Rockville Commissioners: Kris Dighe, Julie Palakovich Carr, Steve Cardon, Christine Davidson-McCord, Donna Vincent Roa, and Anne Goodman

Absent: Seth Adams, Beri Kravitz, David Zbarsky

Guests: Representatives from the Cities of Bowie, Gaithersburg, Greenbelt and Laurel (see attached Guest List)

Heather Gewandter and Amanda Matheny, City of Rockville Environmental Management.

Meeting Commencement

The meeting convened at 7:30 pm by Chair Dighe.

Individual Introductions

Each attendee introduced themselves, the City they represent and their role with the Board or Commission.

Organizational Introductions - Important Projects/Successes and Achievement

Each city was asked to speak on recent projects and important successes they have experienced. The following is a listing accomplishments:

- Rockville
 - Save Our Streams (SOS) volunteer stream monitoring effort.
 - Green Building Code
- Bowie
 - Climate Change Resolution
 - Environmental Practices Inventory
 - Tree voucher program to replace trees that were cut down to protect utility lines.
- Greenbelt
 - Sustainability Master Plan
 - Wind Energy Encouragement – Community Challenge
 - Recycling Program is at 55%
- Gaithersburg
 - Focus on stormwater management – Green Streets
 - Reforestation Project

- Laurel
 - Green Building Legislation
 - Single Stream Recycling
 - WindPac
 - Rainscapes and targeted streams

Challenges Facing Each Organization

A roundtable discussion was held to identify challenges and problems the city Commission or Board have experienced. The following topics were chosen for in depth discussion:

- Stormwater Management
- Outreach, Volunteer Burnout and Recycling
- Preservation of Green Spaces and Green Re-modeling
- Resources/Bureaucracy/Government Entities and Climate

The group divided into smaller subgroups to discuss these topics and to find potential solutions.

Roundtable Questions and Advice on Challenges

- **Stormwater Management**
 - Issues Identified
 - City v. County jurisdiction, grandfathering of existing projects, public outreach, funding for infrastructure, erosion and sediment control (ESC)
 - Potential Solutions
 - Rain barrel rebates and other giveaways, bulk rain barrel purchasing among communities and sharing technical experience on stormwater issues.
- **Outreach, Volunteers and Recycling**
 - Advertising opportunities to groups (and not always to individuals)
 - HOAs, civic associations, churches, business groups
 - Create an environmental activities calendar (environmental month!)
 - Promote calendar of events in new ways.
 - Electronic road signs, use community relations city staff, city website via a front page “ticker”.
 - Promote in schools for SSL hours.
 - Promote through private schools.
 - Volunteers (preventing volunteer burnout)
 - Recognize your volunteers!
 - Picnics, certificates of appreciation, end of year thank you notes.

- Volunteer Coordinator – to assist in coordinating volunteer activities.
- Promoting Recycling
 - Education plan for various age groups
 - Present in schools or at environmental events
 - Refuse worker tattle tale. The refuse workers know which houses are not recycling. Get a list and target education mailings or visit with information.
 - Refundable beverage container policy/program to decrease pollutions of recyclables.
- **Greenspaces and Green Re-modeling**
 - Promoting backyard habitat (NWF - Community Wildlife Habitat)
 - Rebate programs to promote residential activities.
 - Rainbarrel, conservation landscaping, lawn mower, mulch and tree rebates.
 - Protecting Existing Greenspaces
 - Example: Redgate golf course in Rockville – Large community effort to keep the space from being converted to residential, a multi-use facility or sporting arena. Efforts to preserve this space as green.
 - Finding areas to connect as green corridors: Example: Any Rockville parks or green spaces that border green spaces in Gaithersburg.
 - Connect open areas by promoting walkable communities
 - Finding opportunities for our aging housing stock
 - Finding and promoting programs and rebates for ALL residents to promote green remodeling.
- **Resources/Bureaucracy/Government Entities and Climate**
 - Baltimore-Washington Partnership for Forest Stewardship
 - Threats to Urban Forest Ecosystems
 - Climate Protection Action Plan – Information sources include, Federal, State, COG and volunteers.
 - City Inventory/Community Inventory
 - Mid-level staff resistance: Plan, Goal, Budget, Result
 - Increase visibility on environmental issues. More clear funding and goals toward environmental efforts.

Next Meeting

The group consensus was to meet semiannually in the future. While a date for the next meeting was not set, Gaithersburg offered to host it. Greenbelt also offered to check on the ability to host as well. A discussion was held to identify more Cities that may want to participate in future multi-city meetings including: Columbia, Frederick, Tacoma Park, College Park and Annapolis. Communities invited will be limited to those with citizen boards. The floor is still open for suggesting more cities of interest.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm by unanimous acclamation.

Next Commission Meeting

The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 9, 2010 at 7:30 pm at Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, 20850.**